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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a review of commonly used family models which illustrate the wide range of differences in definition of the American family. Its purpose is to help assure that national family policy is based on a definition of family made in the broadest possible context. The major part of the paper discusses five commonly used models. The legalistic model is that which is set out by law. Although family law varies from state to state, it is commonly held to mean a group consisting of married heterosexuals and their children. The structural model comes from definitions and variables used by the U.S. Census Bureau. Here, family is defined as two or more persons residing together who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption. The normative or moral model is based on the rightness of biological links, legal recognition, and a patriarchal hierarchy within the family (nuclear family). The social tasks required of a family, i.e. reproduction, protection, socialization, and control, define the family in the functional model. The social psychological model is based on the interaction among people who live in the same residence and/or have frequent contact. The last part of the paper offers a new and broader definition of the family: "a group of people who are bound by their common work efforts, from which their common consumption derives." This definition allows for a wide variation in family forms. (Author/JK)

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FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY

A Comparative Analysis of Public Policy Research Definitions of the Family

The past few years has seen a great increase in interest in the American family--the interrelationships of different members of the family, but more particularly, the relationship of family to society. Changes in the nature of the family are being characterized by many as its demise. But some see the change as a healthy and liberating one for individuals.

The idea that the American family is deteriorating and in this deterioration can be seen the cause of many social problems--crime, increased drug and alcohol problems, increased unemployment, ill health, and increased dependency on social welfare--is beginning to influence public policy significantly. The role government policy may have played, advertently and inadvertently, in this "deterioration" is a matter of increasing concern. An analysis prepared by Joseph Califano for Jimmy Carter prior to the Presidential election had an important influence on the President and was one of the factors that contributed to his naming of Califano as Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. One of Califano's first acts as Secretary was to announce a White House Conference on Families.

Last December, a major new coalition of social, religious and professional organizations was formed in Washington to promote pro-family legislation. During the same month, the findings of a five-year National Research Council study on the status of the family were released, including proposals for a new federal child welfare program. The Family Impact Seminar of Washington, under its Director, Sidney Johnson, one of the authors of the 1964 Senator Mondale Report on "American Families: Trends and Pressures," and consultant to Secretary Califano on family policy matters, has been working on a proposed new public policy which seeks to insure that the impact on the American family of federal legislation and regulations is understood before such policies go into effect.

In a symposium, "The Extended Family in the Post-Industrial Society," the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at its annual meeting in Washington in February 1978, will focus on the family issue as one of five "precursor topics" of future societal concern. Independent of political pressures, the symposia will seek to broaden and refine the range of ideas on the future role of the family and get this information into the "public currency."

Various...

Various government agencies are examining their programs to determine favorable and unfavorable impacts on the family. This activity has brought to the surface wide ranging differences in definitions of the American family and what role it should play in society. Very few federal or private agencies or programs look at the family as a totality. Rather, it is viewed from a narrower mission point of view--welfare, health, education, crime, child abuse, etc. This underlies the point Califano made in his report to Carter that our nation has "no explicit family policy."

As the White House Conference on Families, now planned for 1979, begins to bring into national focus interests and concerns for the family, including criteria, surveys, analyses and evaluations of existing programs and policies, and efforts to chart new programs, directions and policies, it is important to view the family holistically, as much as possible, and to compare various definitions of the family in use or evolving. In this paper, Ms. Catherine Allen, a research associate at Wakefield Washington Associates Inc., has started that process.

The paper, being widely circulated for critique, has been prepared more specifically for the following purposes:

1. To help bring differing organizations and programs into a constructive dialogue, by comparing the differences in definitions, indicating some apparent shortcomings and suggesting a new definition aimed at overcoming some of the shortcomings.

2. To improve understanding of public policy definitions by the academic community and head off unnecessary criticism.

3. To help assure that the definition of the family in this period of preparation for the Conference is couched in the broadest possible context and that the right questions are asked in formulating research and public policy in implementation of national family policy.

4. To contribute to the broadening and enriching of the national debate on family.

5. To expose the differing value assumptions beneath the various family models and the different federal programs and policies associated with them. For example, the criteria on which federal family programs are based varies widely, ranging from those specifically mandated by Congress, those which have evolved over the long period of time, to ones that seem to exist for pure idiosyncratic reasons. Secretary Califano, in an effort to come up with a comprehensive national family policy, suggests as a first step, a careful analysis of the impact of present federal policies and programs on the family. The Department of Health,

Education, and Welfare is already starting this process. One of the purposes of this paper is to help insure that the right questions are asked, using the definition as the way of looking at and behind what is meant by "favorable," "unfavorable," or "neutral" impacts.

Initial reaction to an earlier draft of this report, which had limited circulation, has raised several questions, including: Is it necessary or even desirable to have a single definition of the family as a basis for public social policy? In practice, are not multiple definitions for differing operational programs essential, providing all are conceptually consistent with some broadly agreed national policy goal? Is even this consistency necessary or possible?

All comments on the paper should be sent to Wakefield Washington Associates Inc., attention Ms. Catherine Allen. As a professional social worker, Ms. Allen has had clinical and teaching experience in working with families. She is currently writing a dissertation at American University on the ideology of the American family, specifically family violence, for the Ph.D. in Sociology. Special areas of concern are in developing theory of the family, improving methods of researching the family, and public policy.

ON THE IMPORTANCE TO POLICY OF DEFINING THE FAMILY

(Working draft -- Comments invited)

Catherine Allen

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ON THE IMPORTANCE TO POLICY OF DEFINING THE FAMILY

(Working draft -- Comments invited)

Catherine Allen

Family life provides a binding force for our social system by training -- and controlling -- the individual. With such obvious political overtones, "family"finds itself with a wide range of definitions, each of which suits the needs and ends of those who command the definitions. Today, the most widely recognized American family model is the "nuclear family." But on close examination, we find that this catholic view of family encompasses several arbitrary -- and possibly obsolete -- assumptions. The assumptions giving rise to the nuclear family concept include: a heterosexual, legally binding relationship between two adults; the adults' biological offspring; a common and private residential arrangement; and a distribution of authority which, while sometimes espousing democracy, is by and large patriarchal. There are serious questions as to whether this model approaches an accurate representation of how most people live or whether it is used to serve the status quo. It is the task of social scientists to evaluate demographic data on families and test the model against empirical data. However, the primary source of family data is hampered by conceptual dilemmas currently in question; the U.S. Census Bureau collects massive amounts of data by means of research questions and analysis that show an absence of crucial items and the reliance on obsolete or biased concepts, producing a limited description at best. Moreover, observers with different and opposite ideologies agree that the nuclear family model, even if it provided an accurate description, fails to <u>explain</u> perceived <u>changes</u> in modern family life and therefore in our society.

How is the Family Political?

In exploring the political implications of accepting as valid the modern definition of nuclear family and of viewing it as average and mainstream, we need not look far to realize we are " . . . in a century that legislates official definitions of human nature and then sanctifies them through operations of the state." (Diamond, In Search of the Primitive)

> The major thrust of any program ought to be to support this (nuclear family) as the predominant institution. The incentives should be arranged so that individuals prefer the two-parent arrangement. The earnings at work should be sufficiently greater than the dole on welfare to encourage women who are single parents to remarry. (Women's Washington Representative, 6/12/77)
>
> - from an interoffice Department of Labor memo dated March 15, 1977

This exposes the prevailing dependency on incentive/disincentive federal policy. Not only does the government endorse the nuclear-family-as-norm within the confines of private intradepartmental memos. The Bureau of Labor Statistics, in the following Washington Post article, laments publicly its difficulties in making Americans' lifestyles fit into established BLS models.

(Washington Post article inserted here; see next page)

Notice that even though Norwood admits that this way of defining family is today a "limited concept," it can be justified in that "many American families do pass through this stage." Can we not expect to have government policy address more than a "stage" through which "many American families" pass? Although it is widely recognized that there is an "increasing variety of family types," no adequate alternative model is being tried in the main.

WASHINGTON POST JULY 6, 1977

Other Pay For Half Of Jobless

By James L. Rowe Jr.

Newspaper article has been removed by ERIC due to copyright law.

Turning Theory into Public Policy

Public policy -- to justify itself -- must use concepts which:

a) appear to represent reality;

b) are pliable within statistical realms;

c) meet with executive, legislative, or public approval.

Academicians can use more theoretical freedom, therefore they are able to transcend some of the limitations placed on policy makers. Of course, the true task is to achieve the most productive blending of theory in action.

Most academic thinking forms along the lines of 1) describing the organizational "structure" of the family group and/or 2) analyzing the services or "functions" the family performs for the larger society. It should be pointed out that within the latter category there is a wealth of published thinking concerning "family dynamics." This includes the well-read popular writings of the social psychologists who deal with the individual, given the family, and those who deal psychologically only with the individual. On a popular level little is understood about the dynamics of family and society.

To reduce all three areas from the abstract level to dimensions that are workable, understandable, and therefore useful for policy considerations, the following paper presents a review of commonly used family models. In so doing, a definition which is gaining more and more acceptance offers a starting point. "Any group of two or more persons with a legal or biological relationship" (one of several employed by the Family Impact Seminar) is a good attempt to broaden the scope to include ties between people who do not live together and to account for the various "stages" of families and living arrangements. However, it still fails to capture the essence of people grouping themselves into families and runs the risk of providing a superficial analysis.

An argument will finally be made for a broader and innovative concept of family which, accounting for the variation in family forms, would provide more accurate societal forecasts, and thus yield federal policy makers benefits enhancing their judgments. The following discussion will present the most recognized concepts of family that produce definitions or models. Following each model, a working definition will be offered along with an analysis of its viability as a tool for social policy decisions, and a comment on the political implications of using each definition.

THE LEGALISTIC MODEL

Concept. The lowest common denominator of social order is the law. In its arbitrary and practical ways, law in the family domain provides a measure of homogeneity and makes society flow more smoothly. In America, there is a quality of voluntary acceptance of the law since Americans expect our laws to reflect our values. Though we in the United States pride ourselves on the timeliness of our laws, it is somewhat amazing that English common law still largely informs our notions of what is "legitimate" marriage and family. Legal restrictions assuring heterosexuality, non-incestuous relationships, sexual access to one's mate, and in some cases laws which prohibit interracial and even interreligious marriages are examples of the government's "say-so" over family life decisions. As these legal definitions come to dominate popular exposure, people believe these laws to be derived from the "natural," and they come to be acted out by some segments of society.

Working Definition. The working definition of a legal family, then, is that which is set out by law. Though family law varies from state to state, it is commonly held to mean a group consisting of married heterosexuals and their

"legitimate children." (Although there is a "contract" implied in the old English law which sets out a division of labor between the man and the woman, state governments do not ordinarily interfere with on-going marriages, once their legality is assured. Additionally, relationships which have not been legally ordained are usually considered so after a legally established period of time, regardless of the couple's consent to it.) Therefore, a working legal definition of the family is the relationship set out by the law of each state and usually indicates relationships which have been officially registered by the state. This definition is predominantly used by lawyers in courts when families are in conflict.

Viability for Policy Implementation. Because the law is continually tested and applied, it can claim the tightest and most arbitrary concepts of all ways of thinking within the society; therefore, a legalistic definition of the family eases data gathering, allowing a legalistic argument to be buttressed by statistics.

An historical review of family law reveals the demands on family life in our society as it was forming. Large, extended families were necessary when Americans settled the wilderness. These families (by law or by the implications of its absence) were required to take care of their young, their retarded, the paupers, the criminals, their senile -- to provide, in essence, a multi-faceted, private social support system. Today a study of social welfare law (the Social Security Act of the New Deal, for example) will show its connection with the smaller nuclear groups which are able to survive the pressures of an economy that requires a high degree of mobility and allows unprecedented personal freedom. Legal history in another example, also reveals how family forms have been remolded ensuring monogamy for the preservation of private property through inheritance laws.

Sadly enough, an understanding of historical family law and its applications will also clearly expose the cultural lag between what is "officially sanctioned" and what people actually do. Perhaps law, especially family law, is by nature anachronistic. For this reason alone, the legal definition of family has little ability to significantly enlighten us about either the present or the future.

Political Implications. Policies which are predominantly based upon legal definitions of the family run the risk of misrepresenting the actual life experiences of the mainstream of people in families. Therefore, this definition and the policies it generates operate regressively. For a less than superficial analysis, one must also look at the interests which are reflected in the law-making process to see that law is a strong and effective social control force benefitting the status quo.

THE STRUCTURAL MODEL

Concept. Living patterns, because they are concrete, recurring and common experiences, particularly lend themselves to statistical reduction. Family living patterns such as household arrangement (organization by age and sex), residence, and official relations to the labor market, are census-type variables which are often projected as "natural" or "average" forms of family. This definition of family, then, merely describes how the group of adults and children are organized.

Working Definition. Although many possible definitions can be used in the structural model, the most common profile of the family comes from definitions and variables used by the U.S. Census Bureau. Family is defined as "two or more persons residing together who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption." Household

is defined as "all persons occupying a housing unit," with various stipulations such as the housing unit must have separate kitchen facilities and a separate entrance. Other variables used in conjunction with gathering data about family include questions regarding number of children, their ages, education level of "family head," and gender of the "head of household." Although the strict definition used by the Census Bureau approaches a merely legal one, other predominantly structural variables are largely emphasized in the final analysis.

Thus structural definitions will reflect a gamut -- from the properties used by the Census to such a broad concept as "domestic unit" variously defined: "those individuals living in the same economic unit" (used by Family Impact Seminar in searching the Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance); "a relatively permanent on-going primary relationship which involves at least one adult and one child under 18" (Interagency Panels Information System maintained by Social Research Group of George Washington University). This approach is usually employed by policy makers and public researchers who are required to show statistical conclusions.

Viability for Policy Implementation. The argument for any structural definition resembles that of the legalistic one: it is arbitrary and easy to mold around accumulated statistics. It is particularly appropriate for industrialized society wherein economic and social decisions are made at a far-removed level. Again, structural "averages" often do not account for actual experiences of large segments of American society and fail to capture the true essense of family life.

Political Implications. To the extent that the organization of households has to be subjected to statistical procedures for research and policy decisions, it often implies an "acceptable manner in which to organize one's family.

Because it is subject to its own statistical interests and specifically to implied notions of morality, the structural model often becomes a powerful tool of federal agencies. For example, Census Bureau statistics insist upon a "head of household;" the IRS creates different tax rates for married and unmarried couples; and the AFDC penalizes the family in which an "able-bodied male," when present, does not function as the family breadwinner. These examples point up the penalty to which people are subjected if they do not choose or are not able to conform to the demands of research tools for use by policy makers. The most salient exposure of such coerced morality based on legal, biological and living pattern biases is presented by Carol Stack (All Our Kin) and others on the subject of the black family, which these very biases historically and currently define as "non-family."

THE NORMATIVE OR MORAL MODEL

Concept. Family is a universal and fundamental cultural expression, bound up in questions of "life's meaning." Ideology -- whether myth or policy, religious or political -- creates real-life belief systems which form expectations of what family should be. This can and often does become the ideal to which people hold their own family standards, to the best of their ability given other real-life constraints.

Working Definition. As with the "nuclear family," assumptions as to what lifestyles should be undergird many notions that are readily accepted as definitions. Principally, the "nuclear family" as an ideal model assumes the moral or normative rightness of biological links, legal recognition (the main components used by a host of federal interests), and a patriarchal heirarchy within the family. An HEW

Task Force on the Family reveals in a preliminary paper that if federal social policy reflected a "neutral" stance to family forms (eschewing incentives or disincentives) that the "nationally preferred family model" would probably emerge naturally; and the paper goes on to predict that it is suspected this model would be the "traditional two-parent family." (Unpublished paper representing intradepartmental discussions, dated January 10, 1977.)

Religious doctrines normally openly address the family from this angle. Any professional who works in religious-based agencies or who sees her or his role in promoting the "public interest" through an encouragement of these ideas is also regarded as operating from a normative model. Even those professionals who claim to be "value-free" may be relying in the main on normative assumptions which go unrecognized.

Viability for Policy Implementation. If ideology is incorporated into a model and then used to generate research and therefore social policy, it will undoubtedly reflect a smaller or larger degree of lag between the theoretical model and actual lifestyles. The fact is, even given the strong belief in the "rightness" of these types of models, people's personal family experiences often fall far short of their expectations.

Are research (the scientific kind) and policy (the progressive kind) best served by ideological models or by those which accurately describe how people live? Since ideological models do serve to maintain myths and hopes to which people can be persuaded to aspire, especially in certain "Camelot" policy periods, this may indeed be the purpose of such models. This cannot, however, be regarded as scientific.

Political Implications. Perhaps the gravest social and personal costs with policy

based on notions of morality is the social label of "dysfunctional" or "unhealthy" -- the label given to those families and individuals who do not register normative family patterns. It follows that there is a great deal of "blaming the victim" both by the government agencies with power to make such judgments and, in the case of individuals, by people forever struggling to reconcile their "oughts" with their "ams." Constant comparison of one's reality to such a myth-sold-as-reality results in preoccupation with one's shortcomings and undue indictment of one's family as "inadequate." This, of course, encourages and insures an expanded and perpetuated social rehabilitation and therapy enterprise. Diagnostic labels of "family dysfunction" are widely in use today and will always be a moral and political issue fought through this process of making social policy. We create "sick" people through "sick" families, reinforced through social policy.

THE FUNCTIONAL MODEL

Concept. Scholarly thinking on family recognizes its connection with society and therefore seeks to show how it serves society. The so-called "functions" of the family as an institution of society include a wide-ranging definition which different academic disciplines pursue in a segmented manner. The general agreement is that there are four fundamental functions of the family: to reproduce (birth) new societal members in an orderly way; to physically protect and to socialize those new members into useful, non-destructive roles; to control, yet allow sexual expression; and to exist within an efficient economic production unit by means of cooperation. Of these four functions, economic productivity, first, and socialization, second, are the predominant links between family and society.

Traditional American sociologists, however, have concluded that industrial-

zation almost totally converted the family from a unit of production to a unit of consumption. Whereas the agrarian family worked the land together in production, industrialized family sends one member out to the factory or office to function as the sole "breadwinner;" thereby, they reasoned, this separated the family from work and the worker. In presenting the main societal link (other than socialization) in the family's consumption role, traditional sociologists have promoted the belief in the family as a rather passive group which comes together for the reason of sharing its consumption -- both of life chances and material products. Therefore, the emotional nurturing, belongingness, "irrational caring and commitment," became the happiness variables that we focused upon in seeing the family primarily as a unit of consumption. This, of course, has given direct theoretical rise to the link between sociology and psychology in the area of family and has been very productive on a mid-level basis. The HEW Task Force on the Family, mentioned above, best exemplifies the use of this fragmented model in its preliminary definition of the family: "without regard to the reason for formation or the form it takes, any combination of individuals which combine in <u>willingness</u> to meet each others' needs and provide mutual support emotionally <u>and/or</u> financially may meet the tests of a family." It assumes the self-identification of family and at this point does not address those family systems that are not "willed" by the participants. A further statement of the above is offered: "whether by blood, religious, or legal contract or simply mutual consent, any individuals sharing or choosing to share each other's lives and/or living space for any emotional, economic, or social reasons" can be considered a family. Again, this is a commendable attempt to take consideration of so-called "alternative family life-styles" and dispense with value judgments. But again, has it succeeded in capturing the antecedent reasons why family is formed?

Working Definition. The social tasks required of a family and outlined above define the family in the functional model and become its social raison d'être. So, if a group met these criteria (more or less) it could then be considered a family. Attempts to capture this orientation in a working definition can prove to be little improvement, if any, over the limitations it seeks to criticize. Note, for example, the definition used by the Vanier Institite of the Family in Ottawa, Canada. In trying to provide a functional working definition that is progressive, the Institute defines the domestic sector of our economy as: "the daily performance of those necessary and desirable familial activities on which personal, economic and social well-being are grounded." There appears to be no less than a quantum leap from this description to the process of fitting people into the description.

Those professions which need to keep in mind the link between family and society are the ones most apt to rely on this model -- psychologists, family-system-oriented physicians, therapists, economists, etc. The problem is, however, in their tendency to segment the function which best fits their needs, and this works to distort the entire link between family and society.

Viability for Policy Implementation. This model in its entirety is very useful when one wants to study the dynamics of the family by viewing it over time and from culture to culture. It is perhaps the only approach which will readily expose changes in the family institution, therefore allowing intervention through social policy.

On the other hand, on a close examination of the above-mentioned preoccupation of the family as a consumption unit, we must assess the usefulness of the family as the chief provider of emotional support in constructing social policy.

Certainly individuals derive important psychological benefits directly from their family membership, but two policy oriented questions must now be posed: 1) Is this the only antecedent reason people come together in the particular ways they do? (In other words, does anything other than "fate," "romantic" or sexual feelings and emotional need bear on our decisions to marry and procreate?) It is widely accepted in sociology that there is a socio-economic "pool" of potential mates that is antecedent to one's "personal and free" choice; 2) What can social policy reasonably be expected to do at this level? Can policy make people love each other or does it seek, rather, to minimize stressful and harmful conditions and create supportive social conditions which help release people's natural nurturing capacities. For example, how helpful was the "man in the house" disincentive to welfare mothers trying to create supportive relationships with potential husbands and fathers? Do residential requirements that eliminate homosexual or unmarried couples contribute to their ability to emotionally care for each other?

The functional model poses largely technical problems when policy relies on patterns of numbers supplied through statistical reduction. In thinking about how government should relate to family, these conceptual aspects of the family can hardly be ignored. In the matter of technical application, however, many problems yet abound.

Political Implications. If accurate prediction and supportive social services are the objects of social policy, this approach has the greatest possibility. It appears to keep ideological considerations to a minimum and allows a much broader inter-societal perspective of family dynamics, an increasingly necessary way of perceiving the universal institution of the family.

THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL

Concept. The way people behave and feel in their personally experienced family life is a concern in promoting the well-being and happiness of individuals. Making functional adults out of children involves the process of socialization both from the developing child's perspective and from a parenting perspective. (In the case of childlessness, it is concerned with how adults engage in relationships with each other.) This perspective views the family as a fundamental social group which both acts upon the individual and is in turn acted upon by the individual.

Working Definition. A working definition of the family will revolve around the study of the individual in a group process with emphasis on parents and children in their special patterns of interaction. This is most practically translated into the interaction among people (parents, children, and other adults) who live in the same residence and/or have significant and frequent contact. Social psychologists usually focus on the individual and her/his self-identified "significant others" as the definition of the family group, and they, along with therapists, and social welfare workers are almost required to work from this model.

Viability for Policy Implementation. This approach provides a more precise description of family behavior, inasmuch as it can be known to those who observe and analyze family life, which is very private in the U.S. Case studies, which have a particular depth of insight, offer the closest glimpse of real life family dynamics. If more than description is desired, however, and if a broader tool of explanation is needed to link family to society, then documenting patterns of family interaction is little more than journalism.

Political Implications. To the extent that social policy necessarily addresses the interface of family and other social institutions -- principally economics -- a knowledge of intrafamily behavior is limited in its benefits. That private sector of people's lives, although surely affected by social policy, in the long run only remotely affects massive societal machinery. However, inasmuch as social policy must also be concerned with smaller units, especially when individuals themselves become problems for society, this aspect of family emerges for a very fruitful consideration. All broadly defined "therapy systems," especially the criminal justice system, must ultimately confront these family patterns of interaction.

A NEW DEFINITION OF FAMILY

The Family Approaching 1980

As the economy continues to change and systems of the world clearly begin to acknowledge each other -- as recent years have shown -- the decidedly moral and romantic notions of family are stepping back for a last bow. They give way to some fruitful, new modes of inquiry. The question arises: Can we find a model which will account for variety in family forms and also will capture family life's raison d'être?

With full deference given to all other functions of the family, it is the necessity to cooperate through the family for survival that appears to offer the best connection between people in their families and people in their society.

Most important, the family as a unit of economic production is a group which

is daily about the business of converting the abilities of its members into resources for sustenance of the group. Work cannot be separated from family. Work must come to mean more than officially recognized wage labor. Today's policy makers tred -- or are nudged -- in this area of work and family; and in the personal sense, families will not begin to meet people's needs until we recognize that what people do with the hours of their day not only makes them societal members -- citizens, if you will -- but developed human beings who become more or less able to sustain themselves. Children, therefore, work when they go to school. Homemakers work when they maintain an environment that nurtures and produces work energy and potential. The unemployed work when they "hustle" to insure their daily existence. [It is interesting to note that some elderly make up a group that does not fit this model. Retired senior citizens on public or private pension can be considered workers within this model if they a) physically take care of themselves, b) provide care for members of their extended family, c) do volunteer/civic work. However, the institutionalized elderly or those totally dependent on their families are like helpless children in that they are mainly "acted upon" in this society. Not being able even to maintain themselves, these groups would not readily fit into this model. A further analysis along this line might help in the much needed breakthrough on theory of the elderly in the U.S. society.]

FAMILY AND WORK

Concept. The family is the smallest group of individuals whose mutual need is to survive. They survive through production. Production, then, is one's work, waged or not, exchanged or not. Work, therefore, becomes the use of the hours of the day that directly or indirectly contributes to our present or future survival.

People are necessarily engaged in work most of their days, most of their lives.

Working Definition. At this stage, there are certain problems in translating this way of seeing the reason for family into a working definition that will allow computers and statisticians to formulate graphs and charts. However, we might propose that the family is a group of people who are bound by their common work efforts, from which their common consumption derives. This definition will necessarily give each "family member" her or his proper recognition in the process of family interacting with society and will not exclude family forms of any type.

Viability for Policy Implementation. One of the biggest drawbacks to advocating a new conceptualization of family is in getting respondents to perceive in new ways so that the research process can be valid. To throw off the legal and biological and residential restrictions could cause confusion on the part of both investigators and respondents. It certainly makes "head of household" passé. It brings into full focus the unrecognized labor of the homemaker. It lifts students out of the "unemployed ghetto" to which they are accustomed. It exposes publicly the real results of inadequate welfare measures. It also brings into sharper focus the actual work habits of families and the variation in values. It promises to take into account all forms of family life, conventional or not. It assures that families will not become isolated groups with no discernable connection to society. It will monitor changes in both values and social conditions. For these reasons, this type of definition, when more fully developed, should be able to explain and predict more of the dynamics of family and society. It is not easily reducible to numbers and might require methodologies that are not as "acceptable" as survey research. It will also severely question the "status quo"

notion of the family as "sacred."

Political Implications. There are a host of political implications of this new concept, many of which are not even perceptible at this time. For one thing, the male breadwinner model will be rendered virtually useless. Therefore, the attempt to push the working woman into this model will also lead nowhere. The previous ability to separate work from family will fail. The previous ability to separate children and their care from working parents will collapse. Workers will have to be seen as family members with never ending responsibilities, and family members will by definition consider themselves in the light of their work. Established moral forces will find their proclamations of personal life complicated by economic and political dragons. Family life will be exposed in its raw nakedness and the gap between what we say we believe and what we do will be exposed. The inherent alienation in an artificial separation of family and society, from our personal life with our societal life, will be reduced as people come to see themselves as performing simultaneous roles and as social policy begins to better meet people's needs.